

Dear Members of the Human Services Committee of Connecticut General Assembly:

My name is Catherine Bradley, and I am from Ridgefield. I am a Master of Social Work student at Fordham University, and I stand in support of H.B. 6616: An Act Concerning Expansion of HUSKY Health Benefits to Those Ineligible due to Immigration Status.

This is the third consecutive legislative session in which I have submitted testimony in support of extending HUSKY coverage to undocumented immigrants. I appreciate that this chamber has expanded access to children ages 0-12 and to those in need of prenatal and postpartum care, but the reality is that the need for health coverage does not magically disappear at a certain age. The state of Connecticut must develop a sustainable and long-term plan to grant all undocumented immigrants in our state access to healthcare.

This issue is important to me as a future social worker and a former healthcare employee. I previously worked as a receptionist at a physical therapy office, where children, adolescents, and adults of all ages received physical therapy for everything from broken bones to scoliosis to joint replacement. But without insurance, just six sessions cost a total of \$1,020. For these patients, physical therapy is necessary to avoid increased pain and decreased mobility later in life. But for many undocumented immigrants, that care is out of reach due to the prohibitive out-of-pocket costs. Furthermore, extending the basic human right of healthcare upholds key values of the National Association of Social Workers' Code of Ethics, including social justice and the dignity and worth of each person.

Passing H.B. 6616 would be a massive step in healthcare equity. Extending care to people up to age 26 would match the age bracketing of the Affordable Care Act, which includes not only children but young parents, workers, and students as well. Though my support for this bill stems from my fundamental belief that healthcare is a human right, there are several statistics in support of this bill as well. 57% of Connecticut voters support expanding HUSKY to all undocumented immigrants.¹ Savings to hospitals from uncompensated care costs could amount to \$63.3 million, in addition to the approximately \$15 million it costs to run the state's emergency Medicaid program.² Passing this bill makes political, financial, and, most importantly, moral sense.

In conclusion, I support H.B. 6616, and I ask the committee to pass this legislation. Looking forward, I ask the committee to develop a plan to ensure healthcare access for immigrants of all ages. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,
Catherine Bradley
Ridgefield, CT

¹ [Research on Support for Allowing Undocumented Immigrants to Access Medicaid in Connecticut \(July 2022\)](#)

² [Expanding Insurance Coverage to Undocumented Immigrants in Connecticut | RAND](#)